

February 24, 2009 - Rep. Slaughter Leads High Speed Rail Meeting With Upstate NY Caucus

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Rep. Slaughter Leads High Speed
Rail Meeting With Upstate NY Caucus, NYS Department of Transportation, Federal
Railroad Administration, and Rail Companies

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28),
Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today led a meeting between the
new, bi-partisan Upstate New York Caucus and representatives from Governor
Paterson's office, the New York State Department of Transportation, the Federal

Railroad Administration, and regional rail companies, Amtrak, CSX, and SYSTRA. The purpose of today's meeting was to coordinate on-going efforts to develop of high-speed rail between Albany and Buffalo.

"I think it's astonishing that Upstate New Yorkers don't have good transportation options to travel the area or visit our state's capital," Slaughter said. "The development of high-speed rail in Upstate New York is a topmost priority for us because it will not only address Upstate New York's woeful lack of transportation option but also create good-paying jobs throughout the region."

Last night, Congresswoman Slaughter spoke with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood to ensure support from the Obama Administration. Recently, Congresswoman Slaughter has led meetings between the Caucus and James Oberstar, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Congressional point person for transportation projects.

"We're working to make sure we have all the right people at the table on this project to make sure we can move forward quickly, effectively, and with a strong base of support," Slaughter concluded.

BACKGROUND

Benefits of High Speed Rail

The development of a new high speed rail line in Upstate New York offers many potential benefits.

With improved service reliability, frequency, and reduced travel time, it is anticipated that a new high-speed rail line would create new ridership markets directly benefiting Upstate New York's universities, technical centers, and tourist destinations.

Conservative estimates indicate that a new high speed rail initiative would create an additional 12,000 construction jobs and increase New York State's economic output by almost \$2 billion.

Furthermore, Canada, our nation's largest trading partner, is simultaneously developing their own high-speed rail network. Our combined network will provide reliable, fast, and frequent passenger service and greatly expand capacity for moving more freight by rail internationally. It will connect major international businesses and airports from Toronto and Montreal to Boston, Albany, and Buffalo. Importantly, it will improve the Empire Corridor business climate, including a reduction in business-related costs and increased attractiveness of upstate urban regions for business development.

Lastly,
rail improvements have potential energy and air quality benefits over car and air travel. It is estimated that a new high-speed rail route will reduce the volume of interstate highway traffic by nearly two million trips annually, helping to alleviate congestion and improve air quality. What's more, over five million gallons of gasoline would be saved annually.

Upstate New York
Caucus

Last
month, Congresswoman Slaughter formed the new, bi-partisan Upstate New York Caucus which was promptly joined by all eleven members of Congress representing Upstate. The purpose of the Caucus is to address issues facing Upstate New York and collectively work to revive the regional economy and create good-paying jobs.

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